SUMMER 1999

NEWS BRIEF

July 20-24 Celebrate the 1999 Neighborhood Networks Conference part of HUD's Best Practices and Technical Symposium "Building A Better Tomorrow"

Neighborhood Networks

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Housing-Multifamily
www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org

The Net's Working:
Centers Cast Their Nets and Garner Partners

"Charity is the heart of corporate giving, but partnerships between the business sector and a Neighborhood Networks center are really engines of economic mobility. They can change a life as well as the fabric of a community."

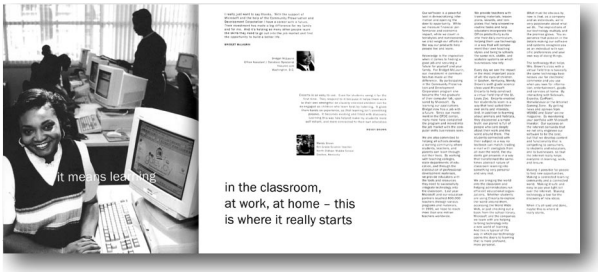
- HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo

Neighborhood Networks has done some creative networking, forging formal alliances with some of the country's leading national nonprofit organizations. At the local level, too, individual centers nationwide are developing innovative local partnerships that are helping them expand programming and services in underserved communities.

Among the formal alliances are the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which is promoting computer literacy among senior citizens living at HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties, and the National Urban League [see related stories].

"Partnerships, whether they are national or local, are an absolute must if [Neighborhood Networks centers] are to take root and flourish," said Charles Famuliner, national field director for Neighborhood Networks.

Grassroots partnerships are the mainstay of Neighborhood Networks centers, providing direct financial assistance, grants, loans and in-kind services from generous donors whose contributions defray start-up and operational expenses. There are 490 Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide, supported by thousands of partnerships with businesses and corporations, schools and colleges, religious groups, civic organizations, public agencies, foundations and hospitals, all working cooperatively to improve the lives of lower-income individuals and families, the elderly and the disabled living in privately-owned HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing.



Gateway@Edgewood Terrace in Washington, DC, was featured in Microsoft's 1998 Annual Report as a result of a partnership with the software giant. Resident Bridget McLauren's success story was featured in Microsoft's corporate giving brochure. Microsoft donated $5,000 and $91,000 in software for the Neighborhood Networks center's Computer Skills and Office Employment Program where McLauren was among 250 students to graduate from several programs offered at the center.

"By design, each Neighborhood Networks center is different because it was created to meet the specific needs of the community in which it is located. By choosing the right partners, opportunities for center development are limitless," Famuliner said.

Some of the most innovative Neighborhood Networks partnerships provide jobs to residents who successfully complete training and job skills programs.

- Trump AC Properties is helping residents find employment in the gaming and hospitality industries. In Atlantic City, NJ, residents at the **Atlantic Villas Neighborhood Networks Center** are learning important job training skills—direct from the professionals. This training is giving participants the chance to enter New Jersey's fast-growing casino industry, which employs nearly 50,000 people and may need an additional 20,000 workers over the next five years. Trump helped the center hammer out a training curriculum

Continued on page 4

Get Involved with Neighborhood Networks

To learn how you can participate in Neighborhood Networks efforts nationally and in your local community, contact the **Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743** or visit the website at ***www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.***

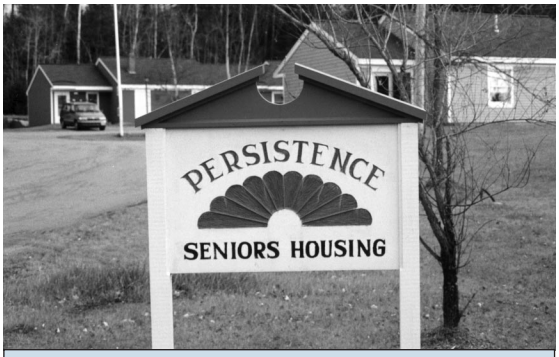
CENTER NEWSLINE

Intellectual Mobility on Maine's Rural Coast:
Computer Links, Not Lobsters, Reign Supreme

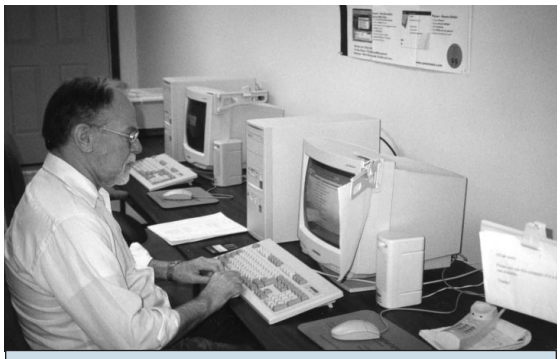
Sedgwick may be on the Maine mainland but its location doesn't make it less remote than nearby Deer Isle, which is only a causeway away. It's the region for blueberry harvesting and lobster fishing.

This is where the winters are hard and residents must be hardy.

"It's also where bus service isn't very reliable, cable access is relatively new and many elderly residents and residents with disabilities depend on computers to communicate with family and friends and to access life beyond these small coastal towns," said Kim Thibodeau, coordinator of the Computer Learning Center at the Neighborhood Networks centers here. Sedgwick and Deer Isle are the most remote of the nonprofit Housing Foundation's seven sites, more than two hours' traveling time from the main computer center in Orono, ME.



Neighborhood Networks centers may be identified with urban cores but there are rural centers, too, including this one in Persistence, ME.



Jim McDonald, a computer trainee placed by the National Council on Aging, staffs the Neighborhood Networks center at Talmar Wood in Orono, ME.

An inner city may seem the likeliest place for a Neighborhood Networks center, but in rural Maine, these centers meet unusual demands. One of them, Thibodeau said, is to overcome the isolation experienced by residents whose age, health or physical disability limit their mobility and activity.

"One woman admitted that the computer has made her intellectually mobile," Thibodeau said, describing a resident who can't easily leave the building because she is on oxygen. But she can access the community room where the computer is located.

At the community rooms at Benjamin River in Sedgwick and Deer Run at Deer Isle, residents from age 62 to 90-plus, once intimidated by computers, are now keying in website addresses, researching health issues, writing to friends and relatives, shopping, playing games and following their favorite soap operas. They can also communicate with Thibodeau and Housing Foundation Executive Director Duska Hayman, providing updates about site maintenance needs and general information about what is happening at their housing complex.

"I have learned a new freedom—the freedom to increase my knowledge of the world beyond Newburgh via the Internet," said Gail Peoples, a resident at Persistence, the Housing Foundation's Newburgh site, where she developed a newsletter for residents.

To introduce residents to computers, Thibodeau said she first identified the interests of these seniors and then showed them how to find web pages and research information relevant to their needs. While one resident keeps up on daytime soaps, another researches UFOs, she said, noting the diversity of interests among residents. One resident, recently diagnosed with a heart ailment, uses the Internet to learn about her condition so she can speak intelligently with her physician, Thibodeau said.

"I will admit that seniors are the hardest people to get on the computer but once they're accustomed to it, they're the hardest to get off."

Neighborhood Networks Launches Nationwide Children's Health Insurance Enrollment Effort

Supporting President Clinton's initiative to provide health care coverage to as many as 11 million children, Neighborhood Networks recently kicked off a nationwide grassroots effort to enroll children in the $24 billion Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) which was signed into law by the President in August 1997.

CHIP is a state-administered health insurance program, which provides coverage to uninsured children up to age 19.

The program benefits parents whose income is too high to qualify them for Medicaid and who do not receive or cannot afford health insurance through their employer.

Charles Famuliner, HUD Neighborhood Networks national field director, welcomes a representative of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, one of the CHIP event sponsors.

The kickoff event was held April 17 at **The Vantage** and **The Parke at the Edgewood Terrace Apartments** in **Washington, DC**. It was the first of a series of events taking place at Neighborhood Networks centers throughout the nation. More than 80 Neighborhood Networks centers have expressed interest in working with the CHIP Neighborhood Networks collaboration to provide health care insurance to children.

The Edgewood event was sponsored and organized through a Neighborhood Networks collaboration with the National Consortium for African American Children, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and HOPE For Kids, whose volunteers assisted residents in enrolling children in CHIP. Capital Community Health Plan, a local health maintenance organization, provided free health screenings.

(From left) Charles Famuliner, HUD Neighborhood Networks national field director; Brenda Leath, president and CEO, National Consortium for African American Children; Leslie Steen, president, Community Preservation and Development Corp.; Cora Dixon, program committee member, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, North Atlantic Region; Sherilyn Pruitt, public health analyst, Bureau of Primary Health Care; and Pamela Luckett, program director, HOPE For Kids, Inc., share an informal moment before the program.

Volunteers for HOPE For Kids acquaint residents with the CHIP initiative.

In February 1998, President Clinton formed the Interagency Children's Health Outreach Task Force consisting of eight federal agencies, including HUD. The agencies were directed to examine ways they could coordinate efforts to reach eligible children and bolster public awareness about the number of children without access to health care. For more information about CHIP, contact Ruth Fisher of Neighborhood Networks at **1-888-312-2743**.

Newswatch

- In February, the *Columbus Telegram* and radio station *KNIR-FM* featured a grand opening at the **Columbian Village Neighborhood Networks Center** in **Columbus, NE**.
- In Washington state, the *Spokane Journal of Business* published an article on the new center at **Lilac Plaza** in Spokane.
- The *Jackson Clarion Ledger* recently highlighted the grand opening of the Neighborhood Networks center at the **Southview Apartments** in **Aberdeen, MS**.
- The *Camden Courier Post*, a New Jersey daily newspaper, published an article about the opening of a new center at **Browns Woods Apartments** in **Browns Woods, NJ**.

IN BUSINESS

Entrepreneurship Pilot Project Moves Ahead

Entrepreneurship is at the heart of a $2.1 million National Urban League fund raising campaign that will provide microenterprise development training at six Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide. To date, nearly $1 million has been raised.

The microenterprise pilot project is an outcome of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the National Urban League and HUD in 1997 that laid the framework for development of economic and community empowerment initiatives targeting blacks living in urban centers.

Traditionally, it has been the goal of Neighborhood Networks to promote economic self-sufficiency by providing job training and placement, but another alternative is through the development of entrepreneurial skills.

The three-year pilot project is designed to increase income-generating opportunities for residents in HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties, develop a model program that could be replicated at other HUD housing sites and enhance the self-sustainability of Neighborhood Networks centers through the creation of center-based businesses. To date, there are 490 Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide and another 600 are in development. HUD launched the Neighborhood Networks initiative in 1995.

The lack of employment and housing opportunities for blacks in urban centers is reflected in a high concentration of poverty and joblessness.

Economic self-sufficiency among HUD housing residents has been hampered by the population shift to the suburbs that has taken with it job opportunities which were once centralized in cities. According to an Urban League study, the black share of the workforce falls sharply as distance from predominantly black neighborhoods increases. Additionally, welfare reform has intensified demands on recipients to become wage earners regardless of job availability.

Under an agreement between the National Urban League and the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO), a national umbrella of 500 microenterprise development groups, AEO will provide basic skills training and technical assistance in microenterprise development, and be the liaison between start-up businesses and potential lenders.

Additionally, this project is expected to give Neighborhood Networks centers the expertise to develop their own profit centers. It's envisioned that centers will be able to provide administrative services, like database management, bookkeeping and desktop publishing, to businesses which outsource work.

The 'Net, *Continued from page 1*

and the program's third class graduated recently. On graduation day, students are interviewed for positions at Trump sites and as of April 1999, 14 students who went through the training program have been hired.

- **Greenbriar East Apartments Center** in **Columbus, Ohio**, works in partnership with several companies, including Eddie Bauer, Sears and The Limited, to fill workforce needs. The center pre-screens and trains workers for the companies, which in turn pay a finder's fee for employees who remain on the job for a designated length of time. The center also provides transportation to the jobs and is developing 24-hour child care capabilities. In 1998, 700 people participated in Greenbriar's employment training.

Other partnerships with local colleges and universities have provided residents with reading, writing and math skills, helped them learn English or earn their high school equivalency diploma.

- Georgia State University provides students to tutor residents at the **Village at Bedford Pines** in **Atlanta, GA**, and faculty to help coordinate the center's adult education program. This spring, **Bedford Pines** and Georgia State University's Department of Distant Learning jointly applied for a grant to establish three career technology academies. In addition, Atlanta University Center provides work-study students to staff the center's after-school program.
- Sociology students from the University of Northern Colorado developed a partnership with **Island Grove Village Apartments** in **Greeley, CO**. As part of their coursework, students assisted children with homework, art projects and computer activities and games. To assist Mexican-American residents, students tutored participants in the center's English as a Second Language (ESL) program. To link residents with services and organizations outside the center, students created a web site for residents.

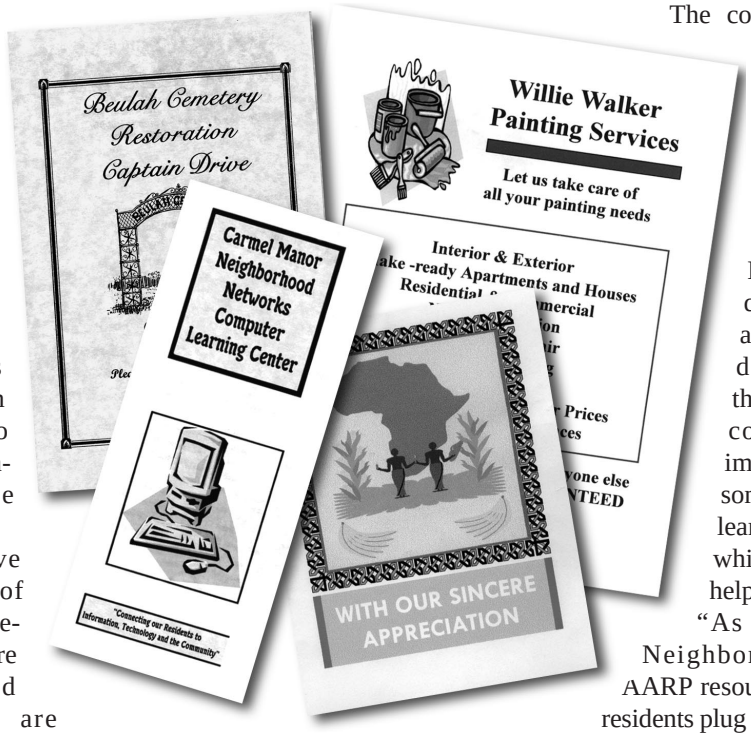
Seniors Learn the ABC's of www.

Seniors can quickly learn to use the Internet through an interactive computer training program available to Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide. Developed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and customized by Neighborhood Networks, the program is part of a partnership between AARP and Neighborhood Networks that encourages the use of computers among seniors at HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing.

Launched as a pilot project this spring, the program quickly expanded to dozens of center locations across the country.

Computers have become a source of information and recreation for seniors where Neighborhood Networks centers are located, but a program had to be developed which was resident-friendly and recognized the needs of the population it was serving.

"Introduction to the Internet" is an introductory course delivered via e-mail to participating Neighborhood Networks centers that have registered for this on-line interactive program. Lessons are sent to centers bi-weekly for eight weeks. They begin with the story behind the development of the Internet and basic descriptions of its features, like news groups and chat rooms, and advance each week to finding various web sites and instructions on how users can conduct their own web search.



Invitations, announcements, business cards and flyers created by residents at Carmel Manor in Vicksburg, MS, who are launching the center's microenterprise initiative.

The course was designed for flexibility; it can be taught by an instructor or it can be self-paced. In addition, an on-line moderator at Neighborhood Networks fields questions from users and encourages dialogue among them. The self-study component is an important one because some residents prefer learning on their own, while others prefer the help of center staff.

"As a partner with Neighborhood Networks, AARP resources can help more residents plug in to the information and resources they need to become independent and active in their communities," said AARP housing specialist Leon Harper when the program was introduced.

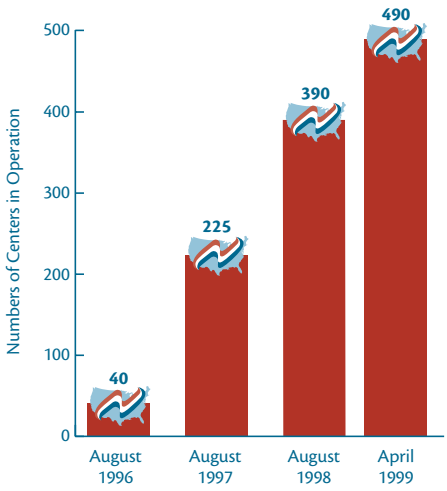
For information about Introduction to the Internet, call Deborah Volk of Neighborhood Networks at **1-888-312-2743**.

HUD Neighborhood Networks **NEWS BRIEF**

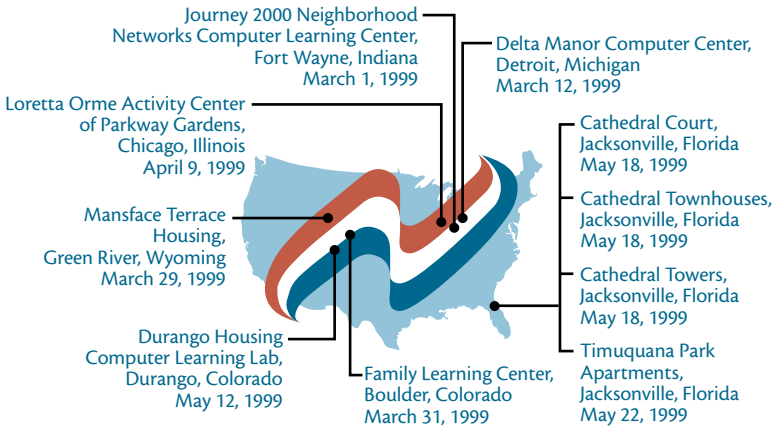
Written by: Jennifer Eddy, Ruth Fisher, Alan Isaac, Barbara Kreisler, Bill Weger
Editorial Board: Lucinda Flowers, Jerry Garcia, Vivian Guilfoy, Susan Guthrie, Carole Norris, Steve Seuser, Ayana Shepherd, Carol Steinbach, Debby Volk, Bill Weger
Managing Editor: Barbara Kreisler
Layout: ICF Graphics
Original Design: Ruder Finn

Neighborhood Networks News Brief is published quarterly by the Government Printing Office (GPO) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Multifamily Housing. It is distributed to the public, HUD field offices and Neighborhood Networks centers. ***For additional copies, please call the Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743.***

Neighborhood Networks Centers in Operation



There are 490 Neighborhood Networks centers located in HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing nationwide. Among the recent center grand openings are:



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

hud next door

Visit our website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Neighborhood Networks

9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, Virginia 22031

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES
P A I D
HUD
Permit No. G-795

HUD Neighborhood Networks